# ORIGINAL



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**COMMISSIONERS** 

MIKE GLEASON, Chairman 2007 DEC 19 P 4: 51

WILLIAM A. MUNDELL J EFF HATCH-MILLER

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF DIECA COMMUNICATIONS DBA COVAD

ESCHELON TELECOM OF ARIZONA, INC.,

MCLEODUSA TELECOMMUNICATIONS

TELECOMMUNICATIONS, INC., XO

COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY,

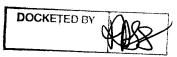
SERVICES, INC., MOUNTAIN

KRISTIN K. MAYES **GARY PIERCE** 

AZ CORP COMMISSION DOCKET CONTROL

BEFORE THE ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMUNICATION RECEIVED Arizona Corporation Commission DOCKETED

DEC 1 9 2007



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10 COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES, INC. AND **QWEST CORPORATION REQUEST FOR** 11 COMMISSION PROCESS TO ADDRESS KEY

UNE ISSUES ARISING FROM TRIENNIAL 12 REVIEW REMAND ORDER, INCLUDING

APPROVAL OF QWEST WIRE CENTER 13 LISTS.

DOCKET NO. T-03632A-06-0091 T-03406A-06-0091

T-03267A-06-0091 T-03432A-06-0091

T-04302A-06-0091

POST-HEARING BRIEF OF COMMISSION

T-01051B-06-0091

INTRODUCTION. I.

This proceeding stems from the FCC's Triennial Review Remand Order ("TRRO") released on February 4, 2005. In the underlying Triennial Review Order ("TRO") released on August 21, 2003, the FCC established criteria for determining which unbundled network elements ("UNEs") had to be made available by Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers ("ILECs") to Competitive Local Exchange Carriers ("CLECs") under Section 251(c) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 ("Federal Act"). Large portions of that Order were overturned by the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals. The FCC then issued the TRRO in response to the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeal's decision.

**STAFF** 

The Joint CLECs1 and Qwest Corporation ("Qwest") submitted a Settlement Agreement which resolves many of the disputed issues in this case. The Commission Staff was an active party in this proceeding, but is not a signatory to the Agreement. The Staff believes the Settlement Agreement is in the public interest with certain clarifications and modifications discussed herein.

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The Joint CLECs in Arizona consist of DIECA Communications, Inc., doing business as Covad Communications Company, Mountain Telecommunications, Inc., Eschelon Telecom of Arizona, Inc., McLeodUSA Telecommunications Services, Inc., and XO Communications Services, Inc. Other CLECs signing the Agreement and encompassed within the definition of "Joint CLECs" contained in the Agreement include Onvoy, POPP.Com, and US Link, Inc. d/b/a TDS Metrocom, Inc.

#### II. BACKGROUND AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY.

The FCC issued its Report and Order in its third Triennial Review proceeding on August 21, 2003.<sup>2</sup> The FCC's Triennial Review proceedings are designed to examine the Section 251(c)(3) requirement that ILECs make elements of their networks available on an unbundled basis to new entrants at cost-based rates. The FCC found in the TRO that a requesting carrier is impaired when lack of access to a network element of an ILEC would pose a barrier or barrier to entry, including operational and economic barriers, that are likely to make entry into a market uneconomic. States were assigned the task of making more granular determinations regarding whether impairment was present given market conditions within the markets in the State at issue. The TRO was affirmed in part, reversed in part and remanded to the FCC for further consideration. The D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the FCC could not delegate its authority to make impairment determinations to the State.

Thereafter, on February 2, 2005, the FCC issued its remand order, the TRRO.<sup>3</sup> That Order established that CLECs were no longer impaired without unbundled network switching. This spelled the demise of what was known as the Unbundled Network Element-Platform, or UNE-P. UNE-P is the equivalent of all of the elements needed to provide Plain Old Telephone Service ("POTs") and interexchange access. The FCC further established certain criteria for determining whether CLECs were impaired without access to other unbundled network elements. If a finding of impairment is made for a particular Qwest Wire Center for an unbundled network element or UNE, the CLEC is entitled to TELRIC pricing for the UNE pursuant to Section 252(d) of the Federal Act.

On February 15, 2006, the Joint CLECs filed a request with the Commission to address issues arising from the FCC's TRRO, including approval of Qwest Non-Impaired Wire Center Lists.

See In the Matter of Review of the Section 251 Unbundling Obligations of Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers; Implementation of the Local Competition Provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, Deployment of Wireline Services Offering Advanced Telecommunications Capability, CC Docket Nos. 01-338, 96-98 and 98-147 (rel. August 21, 2003)("TRO").

In the Matter of Unbundled Access to Network Elements; Review of the Section 251 Unbundling Obligations of Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers; CC Docket No. 01-0338, Order on Remand, (Released February 4, 2005)("TRRO").

A Procedural Order dated June 2, 2006 established a schedule for the filing of testimony and for a hearing in this matter in October, 2006. Testimony was filed by all of the parties, including Commission Staff. Thereafter, Qwest and the Joint CLECs requested a postponement of the hearing so that they could undertake settlement negotiations. On May 31, 2007, Qwest and the Joint CLECs indicated during a telephonic procedural conference that a settlement had been reached. On June 22, 2007, the Joint CLECs and Qwest filed a Joint Motion for Approval of Settlement Agreement and Narrative Supporting Agreement.

On July 29, 2007, a procedural conference was held. Staff witness Armando Fimbres filed testimony regarding the Settlement Agreement on September 10, 2007. Qwest and the Joint CLECs filed responsive testimony on September 28, 2007. A hearing on this matter was held on October 30, 2007.

Following is Staff's Brief on the Settlement Agreement filed by Qwest and the Joint CLECs in this matter.

#### III. ARGUMENT.

### A. The Public Interest Standard of Review Applies.

During the hearing on this matter, Qwest argued that the Commission's review of this matter was limited to whether the Settlement Agreement complies with the provisions of the TRRO. Staff believes that Qwest is attempting to inappropriately limit or narrow the Commission's review in this case. In addition to determining whether the Settlement complies with the provisions of the TRRO, the Commission should review the Agreement to ensure that it is consistent with the public interest. This is consistent with Arizona law and the Commission's review of settlement agreements that have come before it in the past.

This is also consistent with how the Joint CLECs view the Commission's standard of review in this case. Joint CLEC witness Douglas Denney stated the following in his pre-filed testimony:

"The intent of the Joint CLECs is to be party to a settlement in this matter only if the resolution is in the public interest. By filing the Notice of Joint Filing and Amended Motion for Order Approving Settlement Agreement and requesting Commission approval, the Parties recognized that the

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proposed Settlement Agreement must meet a public interest test to obtain Commission approval before any implementation."

#### B. Certain Portions of the Settlement Agreement Require Clarification.

Before discussing those portions of the Settlement Agreement that Staff believes should be clarified and/or modified, a brief overview of the Settlement Agreement follows. The Settlement Agreement provides non-impairment designations for the initial set of proposed Wire Centers in Arizona, Colorado, Minnesota, Oregon, Utah and Washington.<sup>4</sup>

The Settlement Agreement is divided into seven sections. Sections I and II are the Introduction and Definitions. Sections III through VII consist of the following:

Section III:

Initial Commission – Approved Wire Center List

Section IV:

Non-Recurring Charge for Conversions Using the Initial Wire Center List and for Future Commission-Approved Additions to that List.

Section V:

Methodology

Section VI: Future (

Future Qwest Filings to Request Commission Approval of Non-Impairment Designations and Additions to the commission-Approved Wire Center List.

Section VII. Other Provisions

1. Section II of the Agreement may need to be reconciled with Commission processes.

At the hearing on this matter, an issue arose with respect to the definition of the Effective Date of Non-Impairment Designations. These was concern that the parties' definition of Effective Date of Non-Impairment Designations may subvert normal Commission processes. Both parties indicated in data responses to Commission Staff on this issue, that the Settlement Agreement was not intended to replace normal Commission review and approval processes that would apply with respect to filings that made with the Commission. The Commission should review this portion of the Agreement and Section III(B) for consistency with Commission processes.

2. Section III of the Settlement Agreement should be clarified to specify the vintage of the data used to determine the initial list of non-impaired wire centers.

Section III of the Settlement Agreement identifies the initial set of Qwest Non-Impaired Wire Centers which are listed in Attachment A of the Agreement. Those designations are retroactive to March 11, 2005.<sup>5</sup> It also provides the effective date of the initial set of Non-Impaired Wire Centers

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Armando Fimbres Settlement Test. (Ex. S-1) at 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Armando Fimbres Settlement Test. (Ex. S-1) at 3.

25 6 *Id.* 

Id; Accord, Douglas Denney Response Test. (Ex. JC-1) at 4.

which the Commission is being asked to approve, along with the Settlement Agreement. However, Staff witness Fimbres pointed out in his testimony that this section of the Agreement is silent with respect to the vintage of the data used to determine the initial list of non-impaired Qwest Wire Centers.<sup>6</sup> Staff believes that it is important that the Agreement be clarified to include the vintage of data used to make the initial non-impairment designations. In response to Staff Data Requests on the Agreement, Qwest and the Joint CLECs explained that 2004 ARMIS Data was the base information utilized to derive the initial set of non-impaired Qwest Wire Centers.<sup>7</sup>

During the hearing on this matter, both Qwest and the Joint CLECs stated that this would not be a material modification of the Agreement such that they might exercise their right to withdraw from the Agreement. Joint CLEC witness Douglas Denney also stated in his pre-filed testimony that "Joint CLECs anticipate no objection if such a modification were made to the proposed Settlement Agreement of the Parties." The Commission should require that the Agreement be clarified to include the vintage of the data used to determine the initial list of non-impaired Wire Centers.

## 3. Section IV of the Agreement does not address the conversion process which was a disputed issue.

Section IV of the Agreement lists the terms and conditions that will apply to the conversion of UNEs to Qwest alternative services in Wire Centers that are designated as non-impaired by the Commission. First, the parties have agreed upon a \$25 non-recurring conversion charge for a period of three years. While Staff's initial recommendation was zero, Staff recognizes that the Agreement is a product of negotiation and compromise. Given that there is agreement between Qwest and the CLECs on the rate, Staff believes that the charge is reasonable. Staff's use of the term "just and reasonable" was not meant to make reference to a specific pricing standard such as TELRIC. Staff recognizes that the rate is the product of "compromise".

<sup>26 8</sup> Douglas Denney Response Test. (Ex. JC-1) at 4.

<sup>9</sup> Armando Fimbres Settlement Test. (Ex. S-1) at 4.

Douglas Denney Response Test. (Ex. JC-1) at 5.

<sup>28 11</sup> Id. 12 Jo

Joint CLEC witness Denney expressed concern in his pre-filed testimony that Staff may be referring to a pricing standard. *Id.* at 5.

Joint CLEC witness Douglas Denney also stated in his pre-filed testimony that "[t]he negotiated rate is about halfway between Qwest's litigation position of \$50.00 and the Joint CLEC's position that no charge, or only a minimal charge, should apply." However, Staff has a more general concern about this section of the Agreement. During the underlying proceeding, the Joint CLECs expressed great concern regarding the amount of customer harm that could result from the conversion process. Yet the Agreement is silent with respect to the conversion process itself.

During the hearing on this matter and in its testimony, Qwest offered the following observations. First, Qwest relies primarily upon the fact that it has processed more than 1,500 conversions of UNEs to Qwest alternative services and there have been no issues raised by CLECs regarding customer harm.<sup>15</sup>

However, in his pre-filed testimony, Joint CLEC witness Douglas Denney stated the following:

"...[C]ustomer impact remains a concern for the reasons provided in my previous testimony. Nothing in the proposed Settlement Agreement authorizes Qwest to use its proposed method of conversion [Cite omitted] or precludes the Commission from ruling on the manner of conversion in another matter. Joint CLECs raised customer impact concerns in the course of discussing the conversion charge and how, if Qwest appropriately treats the conversion as a billing change, adverse customer impact may be avoided. [Cite omitted]. The Joint CLECs were willing to discuss procedures in this proceeding or in interconnection negotiations. [Cite omitted]. Since then, the Joint CLECs reached a proposed Settlement Agreement with Qwest in this proceeding that does not address the manner of conversion, leaving the subject open for ICA negotiation and consideration in other proceedings." 16

At the hearing, Mr. Fimbres also stated that he was not reassured by the following passage from Mr. Denney's testimony:

"Qwest's conversion procedures were announced unilaterally by Qwest in non-CMP Qwest 'TRRO' notices of changes to its PCAT. Qwest previously said that it would update its SGATs and deal with TRO/TRRO issues in CMP, bud did not do so. (See, e.g., June 30, 2005 CMP minutes, stating "...as SGAT language changes, we will have a comment period and

Douglas Denney Response Test. (Ex. JC-1) at 5.

Settlement Test. of Armando Fimbres at 4.

<sup>15</sup> Tr. at 24.

Douglas Denney Response Test. (Ex. JC-1) at 7.

that the States will engage you when decisions are made. Cindy also said that PCAT changes will brought through the CMP," available at <a href="http://www.qwest.com/wholesale/cmp/cr/CR PC102704-1ES.htm">http://www.qwest.com/wholesale/cmp/cr/CR PC102704-1ES.htm</a>.) Qwest also would not negotiate these terms in ICA negotiations, so that the manner of conversion became an arbitration issue between Eschelon and Qwest (discussed below). Qwest's conversion terms are merely a proposal by Qwest, as they were not mutually developed. [Cites omitted]. \( \begin{align\*} 17 \\ 17 \\ 18 \end{align\*} \]

Joint CLEC witness Mr. Douglas Denney also opines that since the matter is now being negotiated in the Qwest-Eschelon ICA arbitration proceeding, other CLECs may opt into the specific conditions and language ultimately approved by the Commission. However, Staff does not believe that this is necessarily sufficient since, unless offered to other CLECs as an amendment to their current ICA, other CLECS would not be able to derive the benefit until their existing ICAs with Qwest expire or terminate.

Qwest and the Joint CLECs have not provided adequate assurance that this Section of the Agreement as it now stands is in the public interest, given earlier testimony on this issue regarding the potential harm to CLEC customers.

#### 4. Section V of the Agreement is in need of clarification.

Section V of the Settlement Agreement outlines the methodology that will be used to support future filings by Qwest when seeking additional Non-Impaired Wire Center designations.

Staff witness Fimbres raised several concerns regarding this section of the Agreement and the need for clarification. First, Section V.B. (Collocation) requires clarification with respect to the determination of affiliated, fiber-based collocators. <sup>19</sup> Staff believes that the Agreement should provide an inclusive date-range for the determination of affiliated, fiber-based collocators. <sup>20</sup> In earlier testimony filed in this case, Staff had taken the position that "[r]egardless of the data vintage, affiliated fiber-based collocators should not be counted separately if their legal affiliation exits at the date of a Commission Order designating a wire center as non-impaired." As Mr. Fimbres noted,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> *Id.* at 6.

Douglas Denney Response Test. (Ex. JC-1) at 7.

<sup>19</sup> Settlement Test. of Armando Fimbres (Ex. S-1) at 5.

 $<sup>^{20}</sup>$  Id

Armando Fimbres Rebuttal Test. (Ex. S-3) at 13.

taking into account the affiliated status of companies is important and such information is readily available from the public record.<sup>22</sup>

Joint CLEC witness Douglas Denney provided the following pre-filed testimony regarding Staff witness Fimbres' recommendation:

"Staff recommended that 'Regardless of the data vintage, affiliated fiber-based collocators should not be counted separately if their legal affiliation exists at the date of a Commission Order designating a wire center as non-impaired. [Cite omitted]. In addition, regarding Paragraph VI(E)(1), staff recommends that the 'timing of the affiliated, fiber-based collocator information ...must also be properly addressed in this section.' [Cite omitted]. These recommendations are consistent with the definition of fiber-based collocator. Joint CLECs do not anticipate objecting to these proposed modifications, if adopted." <sup>23</sup>

A second concern noted by Staff witness Fimbres was with respect to the time period contained in the Agreement for CLECs to respond to a letter from Qwest concerning the fiber-based collocation status of carriers.<sup>24</sup> The Agreement provides for a 10 day turn-around time by the CLEC to provide feedback before Qwest files its request. Staff believes that this period of time is too short and recommends that the CLECs have 60 days to respond given the importance of the information to the non-impairment determination.<sup>25</sup>

While Joint CLEC witness Doug Denney discuss other safeguards in the rules which would allow CLEC objections or the information ultimately submitted by Qwest to the Commission to be questioned<sup>26</sup>, Staff still believes that the initial 10 day period of time is insufficient. A longer period of time would ensure more accurate information in the end. During the hearing, Staff witness Fimbres testified that given the importance of the issues in this proceeding, a 10-day turn-around time constituted a "rush-to-judgment." In matters of such importance, constructive time devoted at the beginning of the process should eliminate the need for corrective actions at a later time in the process.

 $<sup>||^{22}</sup>$  *Id.* at 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Douglas Denney Response Test. (Ex. JC-1) at 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> *Id*.

 $<sup>||^{25}</sup>$  Id. at 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> See Id. at 10-11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Tr. at 186-187.

## 5. Section VI should be clarified with respect to fiber-based collocation information and related process steps.

This section of the Agreement provides and explains the processes for future filings by Qwest when seeking additional, Non-Impaired Wire Center designations. Section VI.A.2 of the Agreement allows Qwest to file a request for additional "non-impaired wire centers based in whole or part upon line counts at any time up to July 1 of each year, based on prior year line count data" thus restricting filings in the second-half of each year. Staff believes that Qwest should have the opportunity to file for additional non-impaired wire centers without the restriction of having to do so before July 1 of each year. Staff believes that the Agreement should be modified to allow Qwest to file once a year but at such time as Qwest deems appropriate as long as Qwest provides the appropriate data consistent with the methodologies described in the final Agreement and approved by the Commission. 29

Joint CLEC witness Doug Denney responded in his pre-filed testimony that the July 1<sup>st</sup> deadline is mutually agreed upon and integral to the compromise reached.<sup>30</sup> He also stated the following:

"The paragraph provides for a measure of contractual certainty as the Joint CLECs are engaging in business planning necessary to offer terms to their own customers, which requires them to factor in UNE availability when planning for the associated costs, risks, etc. In addition, Qwest's position is that is can only use ARMIS data for this purpose. As ARMIS data is available on an annual basis, the annual time period is consistent with Qwest's claim that it must use ARMIS data. The line counts should be current. Particularly in the event of declining line counts, Qwest should not use old line counts. The annual time period helps ensure use of current data, as Qwest is relying upon ARMIS data that is only available as of December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year."<sup>31</sup>

Notwithstanding, the CLECs concern about current data, Staff still believes that Qwest should have the flexibility or discretion to choose its filing date; but that it be allowed to make a filing only

<sup>27 28</sup> Id.

 $<sup>^{29}</sup>$   $I_{c}$ 

Douglas Denney Response Test. (Ex. JC-1) at 12.

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once a year. No matter what particular date Qwest chooses, Qwest is going to use annual ARMIS data so the date of filing should really not matter.

This section of the Agreement also needs to be clarified with respect to the determination of affiliated, fiber-based collocator information as discussed above.<sup>32</sup>

#### 6. Section VII of the Agreement also is in need of clarification.

This section of the Agreement contains information regarding the application of the Settlement Agreement to other CLECs. In response to a Staff data request, the Joint CLECs stated that "[t]here is no provision in the proposed Settlement Agreement stating that it binds all CLECs." Mr. Denney further testified that: "Although Owest's litigation position was that it wanted an order that binds all CLECs, [Cite omitted], both Qwest and the Joint CLECs are now asking the Commissions for approval of the proposed Settlement Agreement with respect to the Parties that have executed the proposed Settlement Agreement."33

While only certain CLECs signed onto the Agreement, the Agreement's provisions will ultimately affect all CLECs operating in Arizona. In other words, the Commission would not want to use different criteria to determine non-impaired wire-centers for CLECs that did not sign on to the Agreement. Therefore, Staff believes that the Agreement's provisions will necessarily extend or impact to non-signatory CLECs as well. 34

At the hearing, Owest noted that all active CLECs on the service list were provided with a copy of the Settlement Agreement and notified of the hearing on the matter. Staff acknowledges that all CLECs with operating authority in Arizona were initially apprised of this Docket and that many CLECs chose not to actively participate. Staff also acknowledges that active CLECs were provided with a copy of the Settlement Agreement and notified of the hearing on the matter. However, since the Settlement Agreement is likely to impact all CLECs operating in Arizona, the Staff believes that that further notice and opportunity for comment of 60 days is appropriate for inactive CLECs as well

Douglas Denney Response Test. (Ex. JC-1) at 13.

1 since they will be impacted by the Agreement.<sup>35</sup> Otherwise, such carriers will be impacted by the 2 Commission's Order and Settlement Agreement but will not have had an opportunity for comment. 3 The Joint CLECs stated that they have no objection to sending the Agreement out to other 4 CLECs for comment.36 5 IV. CONCLUSION. 6 Staff believes the Settlement Agreement should be modified or clarified as discussed above. 7 and that with such clarifications and/or modifications it is in the public interest and should be 8 approved by the Commission. 9 10 11 Maureen A. Scott. 12 Legal Division Arizona Corporation Commission 13 1200 West Washington Street Phoenix, Arizona 85007 14 (602) 542-3402 15 Original and thirteen (13) copies of the foregoing were filed this 19<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2007 with: 17 18 Docket Control Arizona Corporation Commission 19 1200 West Washington Street Phoenix, Arizona 85007 20 Copies of the foregoing mailed this 19<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2007 to: 21 22 Greg Diamond Covad Communications Company 23 7901 East Lowry Boulevard Denver, Colorado 80230 24 25 26 27

Armando Fimbres Settlement Test. (Ex. S-1) at 7-8. Douglas Denney Response Test. (Ex. JC-1) at 14.

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